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CHAPTER XVII.
A Thrilling Rescue.

"I THINK you have had the escape of your life, young fellow, my lad. It was catchin' those Indians that put you clean out of their heads, else they would have been back to the camp for you, as sure as fate, and gathered you in. Of course, as you said, they have been watchin' us from the beginnin' out of that tree, and they knew perfectly well that we were one short. However, they could think only of this new haul. So it was I and not a bunch of apes that dropped in on you in the morning. Well, we had a horrid business afterward. My God, what a nightmare the whole thing is! You remember the great bridge of sharp canes down below, where we found the skeleton of the American? Well, that is just under ape town, and that's the jumpin' off place of their prisoners. I expect there's heaps of skeletons there, if we looked for 'em. They have a sort of clear parade ground on the top, and they make a proper ceremony about it. One by one the poor devils have to jump, and the game is to see whether they are merely dashed to pieces or whether they get skewered on the canes. They took us out to see it, and the whole tribe lined up on the edge. Four of the Indians jumped, and the canes went through 'em like knittin' needles through a pair of butter. No wonder we found that poor Yankee's skeleton with the canes growin' between his ribs. It was horrible—but it was dooceedly interestin' too. We were all fascinated to see them take the dive, even when we thought it would be our turn next on the springboard."

"Well, it wasn't. They kept six of the Indians up for today—that's how I understand it—but I fancy we were to be the star performers in the show. Challenger might get off, but Summerlee and I were in the bill. Their language is more than half signs, and it was not hard to follow them. So I thought it was time we made a break for it."

"So I broke away early this mornin', gave my guard a kick in the rummy that laid him out and sprinted for the camp. There I got you and the guns, and here we are."

"Did the professors?" I cried in consternation.

"Well, we must just go back and fetch 'em. I couldn't bring 'em with me. Challenger was up the tree, and Summerlee was not fit for the effort. The only chance was to get the guns and try a rescue. Of course they may scupper them at once in revenge. I don't think they would touch Challenger, but I wouldn't answer for Summerlee. But they would have had him in any case. Of that I am certain. So I haven't made matters any worse by belittlin'. But we are honor bound to go back and have them out or see it through with them. So you had better make up your mind, young fellow, my lad, for it will be one way or the other before evenin'."

Off we started, and when we reached the edge of the cliff I looked over and saw our good old Black Zambie sitting smoking on a rock below us. I would have given a great deal to have hailed him and told him how we were placed, but it was too dangerous lest we should be heard. The woods seemed to be full of the ape men. Again and again we heard their curious chattering. At such times we plunged into the nearest clump of bushes and lay still until the sound had passed away. Our advance therefore was very slow, and two hours at least must have passed before I saw by Lord John's cautious movements that we must be close to our destination. He motioned to me to be still, and he crawled forward himself. In a minute he was back again, his face quivering with eagerness.

"Come," said he. "Come quick! I

hope to the Lord we are not too late already!"

I found myself shaking with nervous excitement as I scrambled forward and lay down beside him, looking out through the bushes at a clearing which stretched before us.

A wide, open space lay before us, some hundreds of yards across, all green turf and low bracken growing to the very edge of the cliff. Round this clearing there was a semicircle of trees with curious huts built of foliage piled one above the other among the branches. A rookery, with every nest a little house, would best convey the idea. The openings of these huts and the branches of the trees were thronged with a dense mob of ape people, whom from their size I took to be the females and infants of the tribe. They formed the background of the picture and were all looking out with eager interest at the same scene which fascinated and bewildered us.

In the open and near the edge of the cliff there had assembled a crowd of some hundred of these shaggy, red haired creatures, many of them of immense size, and all of them horrible to look upon. There was a certain discipline among them, for none of them attempted to break the line which had been formed. In front there stood a small group of Indians—little, clean limbed, red fellows, whose skins glowed like polished bronze in the strong sunlight. A tall, thin white man was standing beside them, his head bowed, his arms folded, his whole attitude expressive of his horror and dejection. There was no mistaking the angular form of Professor Summerlee.

In front of and around this dejected group of prisoners were several ape



Two of His Guards Caught Him by the Wrist and Pulled Him Brutally to the Front.

men, who watched them closely and made all escape impossible. Then, right out from all the others and close to the edge of the cliff, were two figures, so strange, and under other circumstances so ludicrous, that they absorbed my attention. The one was our comrade, Professor Challenger. The remains of his coat still hung in strips from his shoulders, but his shirt had been all torn out, and his great head merged itself in the black tangle which covered his mighty chest. He had lost his hat, and his hair, which had grown long in our wanderings, was flying in wild disorder. A single day seemed to have changed him from the highest product of modern civilization to the most desperate savage in South America. Beside him stood his master, the king of the ape men. In all things he was, as Lord John had said, the very image of our professor, save that his coloring was red instead of black. The same short, broad figure, the same heavy shoulders, the same forward hang of the arms, the same bristling beard merging itself in the hairy chest. Only above the eyebrows, where the sloping forehead and low, curved skull of the ape man were in sharp contrast to the broad brow and magnificent cranium of the European, could one see any marked difference. At every other point the king was an absurd parody of the professor.

All this, which takes me so long to describe, impressed itself upon me in a few seconds. Then we had very different things to think of, for an active drama was in progress. Two of the ape men had seized one of the Indians out of the group and dragged him forward to the edge of the cliff. The king raised his hand as a signal. They caught the man by his leg and arm and swung him three times backward and forward with tremendous violence. Then with a frightful heave they shot the poor wretch over the precipice. With such force did they throw him that he curved high in the air before beginning to drop. As he vanished from sight the whole assembly, except the guards, rushed forward to the edge of the precipice, and there was a long pause of absolute silence, broken by a mad yell of delight. They sprang about, tossing their long, hairy arms in the air and howling with exultation. Then they fell back from the edge, formed themselves again into line and waited for the next victim.

This time it was Summerlee. Two of his guards caught him by the wrists and pulled him brutally to the front. His thin figure and long limbs strug-



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AN ORDINANCE

Providing for the Sale of Certain Real Estate.

Whereas, the city of Rock Island has acquired and holds the following described real estate: Lots thirty-two and thirty-three, Hale's addition to the city of Rock Island, county of Rock Island and state of Illinois, and a tract of land commencing at a point 150 feet south of the northwest corner of lot one (1), block two (2), Howard's second addition to the city of Rock Island, Ill.; thence running west to the east line of Elm or Thirtieth street; thence south fifty (50) feet; thence east to the west line of said lot one (1), block two (2), in said Howard's second addition; thence north fifty (50) feet to the place of beginning, all in the city of Rock Island, And.

Whereas, it is the opinion of a majority of the members of the city council that the said real estate is no longer necessary, appropriate, or required for the use of said city or its longer retention for the best interests of said city: Be it

Ordained, by the council of the city of Rock Island, Ill.: That lots thirty-two (32) and thirty-three (33), in Hale's addition to the city of Rock Island, county of Rock Island and state of Illinois; also a tract of land commencing at a point 150 feet south of the northwest corner of lot one (1), block two (2), Howard's second addition to the city of Rock Island, Ill.; thence running west to the east line of Elm or Thirtieth street; thence south fifty (50) feet;

thence east to the west line of said lot one (1), block two (2), in said Howard's second addition; thence north fifty (50) feet to the place of beginning; and all owned and held by the said city of Rock Island, be sold in pursuance to an act of the general assembly entitled "An act to authorize cities and villages to convey any real or personal estate, or their right and title therein, when the same shall be no longer necessary for, or profitable to, or its longer retention be for the best interests of such city or village." (Approved March 22, 1889; in force July 1, 1889). The said lots are now vacant and are not used for any purpose.

Bids for the purchase of all or a part of said described lots or tract of land will be received, opened and considered by the said city council at its regular meeting in said city, for at least 60 days prior to the opening of bids on the first day of December, A. D. 1916.

Cash bids only will be considered. Purchaser will assume all unpaid taxes and special assessments.

This ordinance shall be published in the Rock Island Argus, a daily newspaper published in said city, for at least 60 days prior to the opening of bids on the first day of December, A. D. 1916.

A majority of the council may reject any and all bids and a three-fourths vote may accept any one bid.

WILLIAM McCONOGHEE, Mayor.
Passed: Sept. 18, 1916.
Attest: M. T. Rudgren, City Clerk.
All the news all the time—The Argus.

gled and fluttered like a chicken being dragged from a coop. Challenger had turned to the king and waved his hands frantically before him. He was begging, pleading, imploring for his comrade's life. The ape man pushed him roughly aside and shook his head. It was the last conscious movement he was to make upon earth. Lord John's rifle cracked, and the king sank down, a tangled red sprawling thing, upon the ground.

"Shoot into the thick of them! Shoot, sonny, shoot!" cried my companion.

There are strange red depths in the soul of the most commonplace man. I am tender hearted by nature and have found my eyes moist many a time over the scream of a wounded hare. Yet the blood lust was on me now. I found myself on my feet emptying one magazine, then the other, clicking open the breech to reload, snapping it to again. The cheering and yelling with pure futility and joy of slaughter as I did so.

With our four good guns the two of us made a horrible havoc. Both the guards who held Summerlee were down, and he was staggering about like a drunken man in his amazement, unable to realize that he was a free man. The dense mob of ape men ran about in bewilderment, marvelling whence this storm of death was coming or what it might mean. They waved, gesticulated, screamed and tripped over those who had fallen. Then, with a sudden impulse, they all rushed in a howling crowd to the trees for shelter, leaving the ground behind

them spotted with their stricken comrades.

All the prisoners were left for the moment standing alone in the middle of the clearing.

Challenger's quick brain had grasped the situation. He seized the bewildered Summerlee by the arm, and they both ran toward us. Two of their guards bounded after them and fell to more bullets from Lord John. We ran forward into the open to meet our friends and pressed a loaded rifle into the hands of each. But Summerlee was at the end of his strength. He could hardly totter. Already the ape men were recovering from their panic. They were coming through the brushwood and threatening to cut us off. Challenger and I ran Summerlee along, one at each of his elbows, while Lord John covered our retreat, firing again and again as savage heads snarled at us out of the bushes. For a mile or more the chattering brutes were at our very heels. Then the pursuit slackened, for they learned our power and would no longer face that unerring rifle.

When we had at last reached the camp we looked back and found ourselves alone.

In less than half an hour we had reached our brushwood retreat and concealed ourselves. All day we heard the excited calling of the ape men in the direction of our old camp, but none of them came our way, and the tired fugitives, red and white, had a long, deep sleep.

We had imagined that our pursuers, the ape men, knew nothing of our brushwood hiding place, but we were soon to find out our mistake. There was no sound in the woods—not a leaf moved upon the trees and all was peace around us—but we should have been warned by our first experience how cunningly and how patient these creatures can watch and wait until their chance comes. Whatever fate may be mine through life, I am very sure that I shall never be nearer death than I was that morning. I missed one of the Indians who had had fed with us and asked where he was.

"He has gone to fetch some water," said Lord Roxton. "We fitted him up with an empty beef tin, and he is off."

"To the old camp?" I asked.

"No, to the brook. It's among the trees there. It can't be more than a couple of hundred yards. But the beggar is certainly taking his time."

"I'll go and look after him," said I. I picked up my rifle and strolled in the direction of the brook, leaving my friends to lay out the scanty breakfast.

(Continued Next Wednesday.)

SUNDAY EXCURSION

Through Moline lock to LeClaire dam on steamer Black Hawk. Four hours of interesting travel. Leaves 2:45. Returns 8:30.

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